

for the Department's conclusion that it had been "vindicated" by the federal court's June 11 order. McCain again stressed that the allegations about the Hudson matter "remain of continuing interest to me and the Committee on Indian Affairs."

**c. The White House Responds to Sen. McCain's Letters to the President and the Deputy Chief of Staff**

On July 24, 1996, Counsel to the President Jack Quinn received a memorandum concerning the fact that the White House had received Sen. McCain's letter, which was enclosed with the memo. Quinn sent the memo and McCain's letter to Associate Counsel to the President Elena Kagan with a note indicating that Quinn wanted Kagan to draft a response on behalf of the President prior to the August congressional recess. On Aug. 1, Kagan sent a handwritten memo to Quinn and his deputy attaching McCain's letter to Ickes, Ickes's response to McCain, and a draft of a letter over Quinn's name on behalf of the President. The letter to McCain from Quinn, which Quinn signed without editing, stated that a specific response to McCain's questions about the White House's involvement in the Hudson matter was being provided by Ickes in a separate letter. The letter from Quinn added, "the President of course agrees with you that the Department of Interior should make decisions regarding Indian affairs free from political influence and solely on the merits. This Administration has followed just such a practice with respect to these, as well as other, administrative actions."

As the Quinn letter stated, Ickes's response to McCain, also dated Aug. 1, provided more specific responses concerning White House involvement in Hudson.<sup>605</sup> In his letter, Ickes stated (among other things) that "[t]here was no effort by the White House to influence this decision in

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<sup>605</sup>Ickes's response was drafted by Ickes's assistant, Thomas Shea. Ickes reviewed Shea's draft in some detail, as evidenced by Ickes's extensive hand-written edits.